

# STATE OF MARYLAND

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## SUPERVISOR'S TELEWORKING MANUAL

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# **SUPERVISOR'S TELEWORKING MANUAL**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
I. Overview .....	3
II. State of Maryland Teleworking Policy .....	5
III. Setting-up a Teleworking Program for your Employees.....	11
IV. Overview of General Time, Attendance, and Pay Issues .....	16
V. The Impact of Teleworking .....	18
VI. Supervisory Style, Expectations, and Teleworking .....	21
VII. Other Management Issues .....	22
VIII. Myths About Teleworking .....	27
IX. Questions and Answers about Teleworking .....	29

### **Attachments:**

1. Suggestions for Setting-up the Home Office
2. Agency Teleworking Agreement
3. Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist
4. Teleworker Work Plan

## **MANUAL USER OBJECTIVE**

This manual is designed to assist the agency supervisor in implementing a teleworking program for the employees that they supervise. Aimed at giving supervisors the information they need to make educated decisions about teleworking, this manual gives the supervisor step-by-step instructions on setting-up a teleworking program for employees, and provides them with information on the planning, preparation, and communication necessary for successful implementation and management of teleworking arrangements.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The federal government has been a pioneer in developing and implementing teleworking programs. It has developed a manual that describes a step by step plan to implement teleworking, and workbooks to assist in training teleworkers and their supervisors. Much of the information contained in this manual has been taken verbatim from materials developed by the Federal government. In some instances, state regulations and procedures have been substituted for the Federal counterpart. In other instances, Federal forms, guidelines, etc. are presented unchanged.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to Wendell H. Joice, Ph.D. U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for preparing the Federal material, sharing it with the Maryland Department of Budget & Management, and thus, providing the foundation for this manual. Acknowledgements are also extended for information/documentation provided by: Ellen Russell, U.S. Office of Personnel Management; Maxine Sterling, U.S. General Services Administration, The Joint National Council of Field Labor Locals-Management Flexiplace Task Force, U.S. Department of Labor.

## **PART I - OVERVIEW**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

Teleworking is an arrangement between an employee and the employee's supervisor which allows the employee to work at home, a satellite office, or at a Telework Center on selected work days. The State of Maryland has recognized the benefits of teleworking and has recently passed legislation mandating teleworking for certain State employees.

House Bill 870 (Chapter 466 - 1999 Session) requires the Department of Budget & Management to adopt policies to implement a teleworking program for State employees. This manual contains the State's teleworking policy and should be used as an implementation guide for supervisors as they begin to allow employees in their units to telework.

The manual is designed to provide answers to basic questions about teleworking and to explain how teleworking fits into current work place policies. If you still have questions about teleworking after reading this manual, please contact, Ms. Leslie Buchman, the Statewide Teleworking Coordinator at (410) 767-4718.

### **B. AGENCY PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

State law requires each agency in the Executive Branch of State government to meet a participation goal of allowing 10% of all "eligible employees" to telework. Eligible employees are those employees in jobs most suited for teleworking (e.g. data analysis, writing reports, and making telephone calls).

The Telework Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from various agencies, will determine the number of "eligible employees" in each agency and then determine the participation goal of each agency.

## C. TELEWORKING BENEFITS

*"Our increasingly diverse work force struggles to manage . . . personal commitments, while working conditions become even more important. Recent studies suggest that our ability to recruit and retain the best employees -- and motivate them to be productive -- depends on our ability to create a satisfying work environment . . ."*

Former Vice President Gore,  
National Performance Review

The State has recognized the changing nature of its workforce and has begun to focus on ways to increase productivity while improving the quality of employee worklife and morale. Teleworking in a nationally recognized way to make the workplace more "family friendly" while improving both the workplace and the environment. In addition, teleworking is a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining valuable employees.

Most teleworkers report that they get more done and are more satisfied with their jobs as a result of teleworking. The shortened commute decreases employee travel expenses and commuting stress, while enhancing the quality of worklife and increasing the amount of time teleworkers have for professional and personal pursuits.

Teleworkers also enjoy a greater degree of work-related autonomy and responsibility. Properly handled, teleworking can make it easier to manage dependent care arrangements and create job opportunities for employees with disabilities.

In addition, teleworking has proven to be an effective tool for promoting environmental conservation by decreasing traffic congestion and automobile related emissions. Additionally, teleworking usually results in the more efficient use of office space as less office space is needed to maintain the workers. Employees often can alternate the sharing of office space with other teleworkers.

There may be tax advantages to working at home. You should consult with your tax advisor for additional information.

Overall, teleworking has many benefits. The State has recognized these benefits and has developed this program so that the State, as an employer, can lead the way to a cleaner environment through a more flexible and productive workplace.

## **PART II - TELEWORKING POLICY**

### **STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY**

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**SUBJECT: Teleworking**

**Effective: 7/1/99**

**Revised: 2/1/00**

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**OPSB Executive Director**

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**AUTHORITY:** State Personnel and Pensions Article, Section 2-801 through Section 2-806.

#### **1. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- 1.1 The State has a teleworking program which allows selected employees to work from home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center on an occasional basis.
- 1.2 Each agency will attempt to allow at least 10% of eligible employees to telework.

#### **2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 Eligible Employee - An employee in a job identified, by the employee's supervisor, as being suitable for teleworking.
- 2.2 Main Office - The Teleworker's usual and customary worksite.
- 2.3 Remote Workplace - A work site other than the employee's usual and customary worksite (Main Office). The remote workplace may include the employee's home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center.
- 2.4 Telework Center - A facility that offers office-like work stations and electronic equipment that may be used by State agencies to house Teleworking employees.
- 2.5 Teleworker - A person who, for at least four days a month, works at home, at a satellite office, or at a Telework Center to produce an agreed upon work product.

## STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY

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**SUBJECT: Teleworking**

**Effective: 7/1/99**

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2.6 Teleworking – Working at a location other than the employee's usual and customary worksite.

### **3. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION**

- 3.1 The supervisor will determine which employees are in jobs suitable for teleworking.
- 3.2 At the discretion of the supervisor, employees in jobs suitable for teleworking may be permitted to telework on designated days.
- 3.3 Teleworking is voluntary and may be terminated by the employee or the supervisor at any time.
- 3.4 Before allowing an employee to telework, the employee's supervisor shall review with the employee the following:
  - (i) the Agency Teleworking Agreement (Attachment 2);
  - (ii) the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist (Attachment 3); and
  - (iii) the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4).
- 3.5 The employee shall be required to complete and return, to the supervisor, the Agency Teleworking Agreement and the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist before teleworking.
- 3.6 Before each day at a remote worksite, the supervisor and the teleworker should complete a Teleworker Work Plan, identifying the assignments to be completed while the employee is teleworking. (Attachment 4).

### **4. EMPLOYMENT**

- 4.1 The teleworker's duties, obligations, responsibilities and conditions of employment with the State will be unaffected by teleworking.

## STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY

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**SUBJECT: Teleworking**

**Effective: 7/1/99**

**Revised: 2/1/00**

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- 4.2 The teleworker's salary, retirement benefits, and State of Maryland sponsored insurance coverage will remain unchanged by the teleworking arrangement.
- 4.3 All work hours, overtime compensation, and leave usage must conform to the Annotated Code of Maryland, Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), the provisions of the State of Maryland Teleworker's Agreement, and to the terms otherwise agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.
- 4.4 The teleworker must have the pre-approval of the teleworker's supervisor before working overtime at a remote workplace.
- 4.5 The holding of work-related meetings while at home is not permitted.

### **5. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

- 5.1 The teleworker must have a telephone and a designated work space with appropriate equipment and supplies to do the assigned work at the remote workplace.
- 5.2 The teleworker is not required to provide equipment, software, and supplies.
- 5.3 Agencies may provide the teleworker with the following equipment:
  - 5.3.1 laptops;
  - 5.3.2 desktop computers;
  - 5.3.3 printers;
  - 5.3.4 modems;
  - 5.3.5 faxes;
  - 5.3.6 scanners;
  - 5.3.7 cables; and
  - 5.3.8 software.
- 5.4 Equipment purchases must be related to the performance of the teleworker's specific teleworking job duties.
- 5.5 Before purchasing equipment, other than that specified in Section 5.3, agencies must receive approval from the DBM Office of Budget Analysis.



## STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY

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**SUBJECT: Teleworking**

**Effective: 7/1/99**

**Revised: 2/1/00**

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- 5.6 Agency equipment provided to an employee shall remain the property of the agency and shall be returned to the agency upon the termination of an employee's participation in the telework program.
- 5.7 The use of equipment, software, data, supplies and furniture, if provided by an agency, is limited to use by authorized persons and for purposes related to State business only.
- 5.8 The teleworker will be responsible for the security of all items furnished by the State.
- 5.9 The teleworker shall obtain from the main office all supplies needed for work at the remote workplace.

### **6. WORK SPACE**

- 6.1 The teleworker must have an area designated as work space.
- 6.2 The work space should be maintained in a safe condition, free of hazards that might endanger the employee or agency equipment.
- 6.3 The supervisor shall require that the teleworker complete and return the Remote Workplace Self Certification Checklist (Attachment 4).

### **7. EXPENSES**

- 7.1 Work related long distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days.
- 7.2 At the discretion of the supervisor, expenses for long distance calls, which must be made from a teleworker's home, may be reimbursed if the reason and cost for the call are documented.
- 7.3 The teleworker is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair and operation of personal equipment, not provided by the State.
- 7.4 Expenses for supplies regularly available at the main office will not be reimbursed unless pre-purchase approval has been granted by the teleworker's supervisor.

## STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY

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**SUBJECT: Teleworking**

**Effective: 7/1/99**

**Revised: 2/1/00**

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### **8. LIABILITY FOR INJURIES WHILE TELEWORKING**

- 8.1 The teleworker is covered under the State's Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the remote work place.
- 8.2 The teleworker or someone acting on the teleworker's behalf shall immediately notify the teleworker's supervisor of any accident or injury that occurs at the remote workplace.
- 8.3 The agency and the supervisor should then follow the State's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.
- 8.4 The agency is not liable for damages to the teleworker's personal or real property while the teleworker is working at the remote workplace, except to the extent adjudicated to be liable under Maryland law.

### **9. CHILD/DEPENDENT CARE**

- 9.1 Teleworking is not a substitute for child or dependent care.
- 9.2 The teleworker must continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the main office.

### **10. INSPECTIONS**

- 10.1 The supervisor may make an on-site visit to the teleworker's remote workplace for the purposes of determining that the site is safe and free from hazards and to maintain, repair, inspect or retrieve agency-owned equipment, software, data or supplies.
- 10.2 Before an inspection of the remote workplace, the supervisor shall provide the employee with at least 24 hours notice of the inspection.
- 10.3 Inspections shall only be made during normal work hours.

## STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY

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## **11. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

- 11.1 The teleworker and the supervisor shall take appropriate safeguards to secure confidential data and information.

## **12. DISCIPLINE**

- 12.1 The State's disciplinary procedures and drug and alcohol policies are not affected by an employee's status as a teleworker.
- 12.2 An agency may take appropriate disciplinary or adverse action against the teleworker for failing to comply with the provisions of the Agency Teleworking Agreement.

## **PART III - SETTING-UP A TELEWORKING PROGRAM FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES**

The following steps should be taken by supervisors who have classifications in their work unit that may be suitable for teleworking.

### **STEP 1: Know your Agency Teleworking Coordinator**

Each agency will appoint an Agency Teleworking Coordinator to implement the teleworking program within the agency. The Coordinator is an agency resource who will assist you in setting-up a teleworking program for your employees. The Coordinator will also identify specific classifications that are "suitable" for teleworking.

If you do not know your Agency Teleworking Coordinator, contact your agency's central human resources office or contact Ms. Leslie Buchman, the Statewide Teleworking Coordinator, at 410-767-4718.

### **STEP 2: Know the Teleworking Policy**

Part II of this manual contains the State of Maryland's Teleworking Policy. It is important for you, as a supervisor, to be familiar with this policy. This manual will answer many of the questions you may have about the teleworking program. If you have additional questions, you should contact your Agency Teleworking Coordinator.

### **STEP 3: Identify Suitable Positions for Teleworking**

You should work closely with your Agency Teleworking Coordinator to ensure that you know the types of positions suitable for teleworking. Not every position in classifications identified as suitable for teleworking may be equally well-suited. For example, one position in the classification of Administrative Officer may require the analysis of survey information (suitable for teleworking) while another position may require extensive contact with agency clients (not suitable for teleworking).

You should review each position in your work unit and determine which, if any, are suitable for teleworking. When reviewing these positions, you should keep in mind that each agency has teleworking participation requirements that must be met. In addition, you should remember that teleworking does not have to occur on a weekly basis. Teleworking can be as infrequent as one day

March 2001

a month if the employee does not have enough work that can be performed at home on a regular basis.

In addition, many jobs can be adapted to teleworking. This often requires scheduling certain tasks for certain days. If one or two days can be free of face-to-face meetings and the use of specific equipment, then the employee can often telework.

**Jobs appropriate for teleworking:**

- have face-to-face interactions which can be scheduled on specified days;
- have clear work objectives;
- do not require immediate feedback; and
- benefit from quiet or uninterrupted time.

**Possible teleworking tasks:**

analysis	evaluations	spreadsheet analysis
auditing reports	graphics	typing
calculating	preparing budgets	writing
computer programming	preparing contracts	
data entry	project management	
design work	reading	
drafting	record keeping	
editing	research	

**STEP 4: Identify Suitable Employees for Teleworking**

Once specific positions have been identified as suitable for teleworking, you should work with the Agency Teleworking Coordinator to ensure that you understand the characteristics that make an employee a successful teleworker. Not all employees in positions identified as suitable for teleworking will automatically be allowed to telework. Teleworking is not suitable for new employees, for employees who require on-the-job training, for employees who need close supervision, or for those who thrive on interaction with co-workers.

Employees that you allow to telework should be organized, highly disciplined, and conscientious. These employees should be self-starters who require minimal supervision. Their performance during prior performance evaluation periods should have been at least "meets standards".

Personality traits will usually remain the same when working offsite but may become more apparent. If employees are hard workers, they may work even harder as teleworkers. If employees

have difficulties with their attitude or work performance, then these difficulties may increase after they become teleworkers.

**Teleworkers are:**

- self-motivated and responsible;
- results oriented;
- able to work independently;
- familiar and comfortable with their job requirements;
- knowledgeable about the organization's procedures;
- successful in current position;
- effective communicators;
- adaptable; and
- committed to teleworking.

**STEP 5: Consult with Selected Employees**

Teleworking is voluntary. Therefore once you have identified a suitable employee in a suitable position, you should review the telework program with the employee and inquire whether the employee would be interested in participating.

**STEP 6: Provide the Employee with a Copy of the Teleworking Policy**  
**(Part II of this manual)**

If an employee is interested in teleworking, you should provide the employee with a copy of the Teleworking Policy.

**STEP 7: Review the Agency Teleworking Agreement (Attachment 2)**

The Agency Teleworking Agreement is the document that outlines the telework expectations of the teleworker. You must review the Agreement with the employee and the employee must sign the agreement before being allowed to telework. You should keep the signed Agreement and provide the employee with a copy.

While reviewing the Teleworking Agreement you should discuss with the employee the employees three options when choosing a remote worksite:

- ◆ the employee's home;
- ◆ a satellite office; or
- ◆ a Telework Center.

If the employee chooses to work from home, the employee will have to set-up a home office which will meet work needs. See Attachment 1 for suggestions on setting-up a home office. The employee may use their own equipment if available. Your agency may or may not provide teleworkers with equipment (computer, fax, modem, etc.). If your agency will not provide teleworkers with equipment and if the teleworker does not own it, the teleworker will have to either work at a satellite office or a Telework Center.

A satellite office is simply a State facility that is located closer to the teleworkers home where they would be allowed to work during teleworking days. Of course, you and the employee will need to obtain the appropriate agency approvals before using the office space.

A Telework Center is a fully equipped office that is designed to assist teleworkers work closer to their homes. The Maryland National Guard has several Telework Centers that are available for use by State employees. See the complete list of Telework Centers in Maryland and the amenities that these Centers offer.

The use of the Telework Center does not cost the agency anything unless the teleworker uses the facility on a Monday or during evening hours. To arrange to have your teleworker use a Telework Center, contact Mr. Robert Bishop, Maryland National Guard Telework Center Help Desk Coordinator, at 410-576-6141 or 800-492-2526.

**STEP 8: Provide the Employee with a Copy of the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist (Attachment 3)**

Before the employee is allowed to telework, you should have the employee complete and return the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist. You should keep the signed Checklist and provide the employee with a copy.

**STEP 9: Complete the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4)**

Supervisors are encouraged, but not required, to complete a Teleworker Work Plan before each day that an employee is allowed to telework. The Work Plan clearly identifies the assignments that the teleworker is expected to complete while teleworking.

**STEP 10: Maintain Open Communication with the Teleworker**



## **PART IV - OVERVIEW OF GENERAL TIME, ATTENDANCE, AND PAY ISSUES**

### **Certification and Control of Time and Attendance**

Supervisors must report time and attendance to ensure that teleworkers are paid only for work performed and that there is an accounting of absences from scheduled tours of duty.

Agencies must provide reasonable assurance that the employees are working when scheduled. Such assurance can be achieved by supervisor determination of the reasonableness of work output for the time spent, or by occasional supervisor telephone calls or visits during the employee's scheduled work hours at the Telework Center or the remote worksite. The technique of determining reasonableness of work output for the time spent is consistent with Managing for Results, the State's Performance Evaluation Plan, and is recommended by experts on teleworking. Once again, it is highly recommended that you use the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4) in order to plan the activities of the teleworker.

### **Emergency Release**

A teleworker may sometimes, but not always, be affected by an emergency requiring the main office to close. For example, on a "snow closing day," the agency should not excuse a teleworker unless he or she cannot perform work because the main office is closed. When both the main office and the remote worksite are affected by a widespread emergency, the agency should grant the teleworker an excused absence as appropriate. When an emergency affects only the remote worksite for a major portion of the workday, the agency can require the teleworker to report to the main office, approve annual leave or leave without pay, or authorize an excused absence.

### **Overtime**

The existing rules on overtime remain in effect, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) applies to teleworkers. You should make sure that teleworkers work overtime only with your advanced approval, and you should cancel teleworking privileges of employees who continue to work unapproved overtime.

## **Pay and Leave**

Existing policies on pay and leave apply to teleworkers.

## **Position Descriptions and Performance Standards**

Teleworking will seldom require major changes in position descriptions, but may affect factors such as supervisory controls or work environment. Performance standards for teleworkers should be results-oriented and should describe the quantity and quality of expected work products and the method of evaluation. Generally, you will use the same measures for teleworkers and regular employees who perform similar tasks in the main office.

## **Work Schedules**

The existing rules on hours of duty apply to teleworkers. The supervisor determines employee work schedules consistent with the requirements of the agency.

You and the teleworker should agree on the days and times that the employee will work in each setting. The schedule can parallel those in the main office or be specific to the worksite. For example, a teleworker who works from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm at the main office, may be assigned the same schedule when working at home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center. Alternatively, the same teleworker may be assigned to work from 9:30 to 6:00 or some other schedule at home or at a Telework Center. As long as the schedules are consistent with agency policies, the variety of these schedule combinations is unlimited and should be geared to the employee's personal and job requirements. The process of establishing work schedules should be sufficiently flexible to permit periodic adjustments, if any, to achieve an optimal schedule suiting employee and organizational requirements.

Published opinions by teleworking experts suggest that it is beneficial for teleworkers to spend at least part of the workweek in their main office. It is thought that this periodic presence in the main office will minimize isolation and communication problems; give the teleworker access to equipment, services, etc. not available at the remote workplace; facilitate integration of the employee with those in the main office; and, also, ease supervisor adjustment to the new work arrangement.

## **PART V - THE IMPACT OF TELEWORKING**

### **A. General**

In order to have a successful teleworking program, it is important for you, as a supervisor, to understand how telecommuting impacts the individuals involved. The following information is intended to familiarize you with some of the impacts of teleworking and to provide you with information on dealing with the resulting issues.

### **B. The Impact on the Teleworker**

As previously mentioned, teleworking offers numerous benefits to teleworkers, including reduced stress and enhanced quality of worklife. It also raises certain concerns such as the teleworker's isolation from co-workers. Many teleworkers will not know the extent of their social needs until after they have been in the program a while.

Some teleworkers report some initial feelings of loss of professional identity as well as self-esteem (ironically, because they missed the spontaneous interaction and the reduced level of performance feedback by their supervisors). In addition, some teleworkers perceive (accurately or inaccurately) that their teleworking will lead to reduced visibility with their supervisors and, consequently, reduced opportunity for promotions and/or desirable job assignments. Some employees may also fear that they would be a prime candidate for elimination in a climate where the State is looking for ways of downsizing.

There are likely to be changes in the frequency, spontaneity, mode (telephone or E-mail as opposed to conversations in person), and length of typical work-related communications for beginning teleworkers. Because of these changes, the effectiveness of communications becomes more important. Teleworkers may find that they have fewer, but more productive meetings. This makes meetings more valuable and teleworkers are likely to improve their preparation for and participation in meetings.

To resolve, effectively, the "out of sight, out of mind" concerns and to achieve the quality of communications necessary for successful teleworking, open dialogue about these issues and joint planning between teleworker and supervisor must take place. Also, teleworking schedules should be individually tailored to provide a satisfying balance of time spent at the remote worksite and the main office. Establishing core hours in the main office allows the teleworker to participate in meetings and to have access to main office facilities and resources (including staff support and people resources). Generally, the teleworking arrangement should address the teleworker's needs

for being informed about projects, advancement opportunities, and events that may occur in the main office on teleworking days.

Teleworking is a flexible program. The teleworker should remain flexible about the program, especially during the initial adjustment period. This will enable the teleworker to find the optimal arrangement for his/her personality and job requirements. This will also enable the teleworker to be responsive to unexpected contingencies which may require a change of schedule.

Energized by their increased productivity, some teleworkers fall into the trap of workaholism, sometimes to prove to their supervisors or co-workers that they are working hard on teleworking days. Some teleworkers report feeling a sense of guilt about not being in the main office. The quality of work and family life benefits of teleworking may be negated by the effects of workaholism. Being aware of this possibility, teleworkers may avoid the tendency to work inappropriately long hours by reminding themselves of the family benefits of teleworking, and ensuring regular breaks.

### **C. The Impact on Co-workers**

Not only are the supervisor and teleworker affected by a teleworking arrangement, but co-workers are as well. Co-workers may have work assignments which involve the teleworker or which result in workload changes due to the teleworker's relocation. Some co-workers may feel resentment at not having been selected as teleworkers and/or may harbor misconceptions about teleworking. For example, some co-workers may think that the teleworker doesn't work on teleworking days, that the teleworking day is, in effect, a day off work.

Preventing or overcoming co-worker concerns, misconceptions, and/or resentment is an important challenge for both the teleworker and the supervisor. To the extent possible, the teleworker and supervisor need to include co-workers in their teleworking planning process, provide for open communication between all parties, and keep co-workers informed of the teleworker's schedule and of any changes that occur in the teleworking arrangements. The teleworking arrangement should provide for convenient means of communication between teleworkers and co-workers. Teleworkers and their supervisors should be careful not to burden other employees with additional responsibilities such as faxing, copying, or attending meetings.

As part of their adjustment, it is common for co-workers to compensate for teleworkers' absence by increasing the frequency of communications. This increase usually levels off after new routines and patterns are established. Eventually, co-workers are likely to save their messages and contact the teleworker on a single occasion instead of several times throughout the same day or week. When a co-worker is nearby, a problem or question may seem urgent enough to cross the aisle or hall to discuss immediately with the teleworker. When that same teleworker is out of the main office and must be reached by telephone, some people realize that the information isn't needed

immediately. The physical separation created by teleworking can be enough to encourage employees to reconsider the need to interrupt another person and recognize when issues, that initially seem urgent, can be resolved at a more convenient time.

This saving of messages has been cited as a benefit of teleworking. In addition to decreasing interruptions, many people find the self-imposed delay enables them to organize their thoughts more thoroughly before sharing them with others and/or to solve the problem themselves.

#### **D. Impact On You (The Supervisor)**

Supervisors should be aware of the special characteristics that facilitate the success of the teleworking program. You will be half of the teleworking team. Beyond assisting the teleworker with work plans, supervisors play a vital role in facilitating discussions with co-workers and in solving problems. Supervisors who find it difficult to supervise employees in the office may find it difficult to supervise teleworkers.

##### **A successful telesupervisor:**

- has a results oriented management style;
- has a flexible management approach;
- trusts employees;
- keeps an open, positive attitude toward teleworking;
- tries to accommodate teleworking schedules;
- delegates work easily;
- is well organized;
- provides timely and constructive feedback; and
- facilitates open communication.

Some supervisors already utilize some or all aspects of this flexible management style. For these supervisors, adjustment to teleworking arrangements should be simple. Other supervisors are receptive to adopting this style of management; for them the adjustment will be somewhat challenging, but not difficult. The major challenge, however, will be for those of you who view these new expectations with skepticism and disdain and/or who think that adoption of the new management role will hinder your ability to accomplish agency missions. In most cases, such concerns are unnecessary. Even in cases where such concerns are well founded, they should not be treated as decisive barriers to the implementation of teleworking or the adoption of flexible management.

## **PART VI - SUPERVISORY STYLE, EXPECTATIONS, AND TELEWORKING**

Supervisors do not always consider the effect of their supervisory and communication styles on the teleworking arrangement. Some supervisors require more interaction with staff members, while others prefer to let employees pursue their work with little direct supervisory input.

Either of these styles can work in a teleworking situation, if teleworking plans and procedures are established that respond to these style issues. While there is no "one best style" of management for teleworking, it is important to include style considerations as you plan for teleworking. Your sensitivity to and patience with everyone's adjustment (*including yours!*) to a new teleworking arrangement will contribute to its success.

*Answer the following questions to begin to assess your own supervisory style and expectations. Think about your answers and determine what, if any, actions you should take to ensure that your style and expectations facilitate the teleworking program for the employees in your unit.*

1. In general, how much autonomy do your staff members have -- whether they are teleworking or not?
2. How important to you are changes that may occur in the teleworker's morale and interactions with co-workers?
3. What is your likely reaction if changes occur in other staff members' job performance, morale, and coordination with the teleworker? Do you expect others will want to participate? Is this a concern?
4. What effect will teleworking have on the teleworker's assigned projects and/or chances for advancement?
5. Considering the nature of your staff member's work, what is the maximum amount of time you would want the employee to telework?
6. What changes do you expect you will have to make to manage your teleworker effectively?

## **PART VII - OTHER MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The following are some typical issues for supervisors of teleworkers. The recommendations are provided as suggestions on an as needed basis. They are not meant to imply a required way of doing things. You should pick, choose, and blend what works for you.

### **A. The Need for a Flexible Approach**

Despite thorough preparation and planning, most teleworkers and their supervisors will still need to do some fine tuning once the program is implemented. For example, after being in the program, some teleworkers may find that they would prefer more or less time at the remote worksite. Supervisors may determine that a different remote worksite schedule would be more suitable for the agency. You should maintain a flexible approach to program parameters, especially at the beginning when there are likely to be more adjustment issues.

### **B. Clear Assignments and Expectations**

Ensuring that work assignments and performance expectations are clear and mutually understood by you and the employee is important regardless of the work arrangement. With teleworking; however, the importance of clear communications, expectations, and mutual understanding is heightened. Because you are working on a results-oriented basis, it is paramount to the comfort and success of the teleworking arrangement, that the employee knows what your expectations are. Don't just assume that the employee knows already; even if no changes are needed in your work relationship with the teleworker, the issue should be discussed to make it clear, alleviate any discomfort, and prevent unnecessary problems.

On a related topic, you should discuss what manner and frequency of communication and/or reporting is needed between them for mutual comfort. Don't leave this to a guessing game. For example, you don't want a nervous teleworker calling you everyday to check in unless that is what you need. On the other hand, you want the teleworker to know how much contact you need for your comfort. Again, a simple discussion of these issues should ease the transition to a successful teleworking experience.

### **C. Utilizing the Teleworker Work Plan**

Many jobs don't necessarily have a concrete work product. The work may be part of a long-term project in which a concrete product is not due until the end of the project, or the work may involve developing relationships, reading, reviewing, studying, conceptualizing, etc. None of these results in a concrete product. Even with concrete products, the supervisor may not have a basis or simply not know how to determine quality, quantity, or time requirements for the completion of a given assignment. For these situations, a Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4) can be the solution.

The Teleworker Work Plan is a form that is completed by the supervisor and the employee. The Work Plan identifies specific work products or assignments that the employee will be expected to produce while teleworking. The Work Plan can help the supervisor develop accurate norms and expectations about what is involved in various assignments and how long they should take.

### **D. Staying Connected to the Office**

Supervisors should make the extra effort to assist teleworkers in staying connected to the office. Where possible, supervisors should:

- ◆ ensure that teleworkers receive all office communications in a timely fashion;
- ◆ schedule meetings on days the teleworker is in the office, or set up meetings to include the teleworker via audio-conference, video-conference, or other electronic means;
- ◆ ensure that the teleworker remains aware of and involved in official events, decision making, discussions, and planning; and
- ◆ have an office discussion including teleworkers and co-workers on ways to preserve communications and teamwork.

### **E. Fairness in Assignments and Promotions**

One issue that has clouded teleworking is fairness in assignments and promotions. Favoritism and unfairness in assignments and promotions is a common organizational occurrence. In many cases, teleworkers believe they may miss out on choice assignments or promotional opportunities because they aren't around. In some cases, it is not so much a sinister event as it is supervisors overlooking the teleworkers (out of sight, out of mind). To help prevent the occurrence of this problem or discomfort caused by anxiety over its possibility, supervisors should:



- ◆ sensitize themselves to the issue, and;
- ◆ have a frank, open, and reassuring discussion of the issue with their teleworkers.

## **F. Prevention of Morale Problems**

Over the years, we have heard a lot of concern from supervisors about possible morale problems and/or grievances from employees who are not selected for the program. Some supervisors go so far as to rule out the program for everyone because of such concerns.

Interestingly enough, there have been few reports of grievances filed over non-selection for teleworking programs. One approach for reducing the possibility of morale or grievance problems is to determine a clear set of criteria for selection (even if the criteria include subjective determinations of personal qualities such as independence), discuss them openly with the whole staff, and provide opportunities for non-selectees to develop the necessary criteria and enter the program later. This not only gives the staff a clear awareness of the selection, but also provides an incentive for improved performance among non-selectees.

You and your teleworker should have a positive working relationship before beginning teleworking. If you identify areas of non-performance, lack of trust, or dependency on direct supervision, it's prudent to wait until these problems are resolved before allowing the employee to telework. You should explain the true reasons for denying teleworking opportunities, the necessary steps to improve the employee's performance, and the time frame for re-evaluation. If the criteria are met, the employee can begin teleworking. This positive approach gives employees the responsibility for showing their suitability rather than requiring you to prove that the employees are not suitable.

A common "what if" expressed by supervisors is a situation in which two employees apply for teleworking and both have acceptable job performance appraisals, but the supervisor is uncomfortable with a subjective quality (e.g., does the job well, but needs oversight) of one employee. The supervisor should select the independent employee for the program and realize that this is an opportunity to work with the other employee on the subjective inadequacy. Also, the supervisor can motivate the non-selected employee by offering to reconsider the application if the problem performance is remedied within a certain time frame. Alternatively, the supervisor can allow this employee into the program on the provisional basis, mutually agreed upon in writing, that if performance is not adequate after a designated time period, the employee will be removed from the program.

## **G. Feedback for Teleworkers**

Employees want to know if they're doing a good job, and they also want to know if they aren't meeting your expectations. Feedback is important for all employees, but it's especially important for teleworkers. Many teleworkers are concerned that they won't receive any feedback and that one day their supervisors will tell them that they need to return to the main office.

**Here are a few points to keep in mind when giving feedback after teleworking begins:**

- ◆ Make feedback a regular, scheduled component of your relationship with the employee.
- ◆ If there's a reason for unscheduled feedback, do your best to give the feedback soon after you notice the reason for the feedback.
- ◆ Give the feedback in private and make sure you have time to talk.
- ◆ Remember to balance positive and negative feedback, so that teleworkers don't feel their entire performance is suffering. Keep the feedback in perspective.
- ◆ Limit the discussion to a few key areas at a time. By limiting the discussion, teleworkers can assimilate the information and focus on what they're doing well and on what they can improve. If you give comments on too many topics, teleworkers may feel overwhelmed with deficiencies or may not believe your praise.
- ◆ Discuss the work not the worker. Also, stick to actions for which you have first-hand knowledge, not what a co-worker has observed.
- ◆ Be direct about expressing your expectations; don't play a guessing game with the teleworker. For example, if you must schedule a meeting on a teleworking day, tell the teleworker whether you expect him or her to attend in person or via audio conference, or that it's not necessary to attend.
- ◆ Respect the teleworking arrangement. Make sure your employees (teleworking or not) know that you take the teleworking arrangement seriously and that you expect them to as well. Avoid teasing teleworkers about "goofing off", "getting away", etc. Teleworkers may already be anxious about how their teleworking is viewed.

## **H. Security Issues at Telework Centers**

Security is an important topic for teleworking. Typically, Telework Centers are generally not as controlled as main worksites. A high degree of attention and/or adherence to security procedures, precautions, and issues at remote worksites is, therefore, advisable or required.

Three areas of security on which teleworkers and their supervisor's should focus are:

- ◆ Personal: safeguarding the teleworker
- ◆ Information: safeguarding confidential, privacy act, and/or classified information
- ◆ Property: safeguarding teleworker property and/or State property

General and technical information on security issues, procedures, and precautions can be readily obtained from agency security officials. The objective of this section is to sensitize you to security considerations. Adequate security is more than hardware and procedures; it is also a mindset that leads to common sense precautions. Everyone involved with the program, therefore, should be familiar with the array of security precautions and who is responsible for each precaution. Teleworkers should know what actions must be taken and take them when there is a breach of security. Supervisors and teleworking program officials should ensure that agency security officials and/or procedures are tied into the program.

The teleworker should use good judgement regarding personal security at the remote worksite. For example, the teleworker should be aware of and comfortable with security at the remote worksite. The teleworker should confirm that security is available at the hours being worked and that there is an adequate response to security breaches. Don't assume that any person accessing or attempting to access the remote worksite is an authorized visitor. As stated above, remote worksites do not have the same controls as main worksites; teleworkers need not be paranoid, just careful.

## **PART VIII- MYTHS ABOUT TELEWORKING**

Even after considering all the people affected by teleworking, questions and misconceptions may linger. Following are some of the most commonly shared myths about teleworking and responses to these misconceptions.

***Myth #1: There is no way to judge if teleworkers are really working. They could be taking the day off.***

Not true! The employee's completed work products are the indicators that he or she is working. Supervisors of teleworkers should focus on the quality, quantity and timeliness of work products. Supervisors should manage by results, rather than by observation. For those whose results are difficult to define using traditional performance measurements, performance expectations may be developed and refined through systematic progress reporting by the teleworker. The supervisor and the employee should establish goals and objectives together, using the Teleworker Work Plan.

***Myth #2: Employees work less if they work unsupervised.***

Survey results show marked improvements in productivity, often because employees have fewer distractions and interruptions, work at their best times, and are less stressed due to the absence of the commute to work. Employees who have demonstrated their commitment to work at the traditional office typically exhibit the same or greater level of commitment at the remote work site. In fact, as opposed to working less, the reported tendency is for teleworkers to work much more, sometimes to the point of overworking themselves.

***Myth #3: Social interaction cannot be maintained between teleworkers and their colleagues.***

There are many techniques for overcoming feelings of isolation. These include teleworking for only a portion of the workweek, core days in the office, and regular communication by telephone, voice mail, or other communications media. Teleworkers should be included in all scheduled meetings and events and should receive all office correspondence.

***Myth #4: I won't be able to reach my employees when I need them. What if a crisis comes up?***

Supervisors can set the hours that employees are available by phone or require teleworkers to call in at specified times. As for crisis situations, ask yourself: When a crisis happens now, is everyone always available? Some people are out sick, some are traveling, and some are off-site in meetings or in the field. With a teleworking program, supervisors know where employees are and can usually reach them by phone. Many supervisors say the planning that goes with teleworking eliminates some of those crises entirely.

***Myth #5: Our office requires a relatively formal structure. Teleworking is too unstructured for such an environment.***

Teleworking is flexible, but that doesn't mean it is unstructured. Supervisors should use the Teleworker Work Plan to spell out what is expected of an employee.

***Myth #6: My employees should feel grateful to be able to participate in a teleworking program.***

Supervisors often view teleworking as a favor they do for their employees, without any consideration for the tremendous benefits they gain from a teleworking arrangement. Teleworkers report their most productive times occur during teleworking days and during non-traditional business hours. In terms of productivity, flexible work arrangements allow participants and their organizations to take fuller advantage of employee productivity peaks.

In fact, teleworking should not be seen as a perk or reward, but rather as one human resources work option. Making it appear as a perk or reward may have the opposite effect of creating unnecessary resentment in the office.

## **PART IX - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT TELEWORKING**

Listed below are several, general questions and answers about teleworking. These are designed to answer any lingering questions about teleworking. If a subject is not covered, contact the Statewide Teleworking Coordinator for additional assistance.

### **1. What is teleworking?**

Teleworking is a program that provides employees the opportunity to work all or part of the work week (generally on a regular basis) at remote worksites away from the main worksite. Typically, the remote worksite is the employee's home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center geographically convenient to the employee's home. Working at a remote worksite is called "teleworking" and such workers are called "teleworkers." As a general rule the supervisor and the teleworking employee agree on a particular work product.

### **2. What types of jobs or tasks are suitable for teleworking?**

Generally, any job that has tasks which are portable and can be performed away from the main worksite is suitable for teleworking. In addition, jobs which have set starting and stopping times that are easy to define, where face to face contact can be planned and scheduled are generally suitable. The teleworker and the supervisor can determine which specific tasks are suited to teleworking.

### **3. What types of employees are suitable for teleworking?**

Employees who require minimal supervision, are organized, moderately people-oriented, possess a high level of skill and knowledge of their jobs, and who have family situations conducive to working at home, are suitable candidates for teleworking.

### **4. What are the criteria for participating in the project?**

The job must be suitable for teleworking, the employee must be suitable for teleworking, the employee must want to telework, and the supervisor must be willing to allow the employee to telework.

**5 How will a supervisor monitor the work of an employee who is at home or at an remote worksite?**

With quantifiable tasks, quantity and quality should be measured as it is currently being done in the office. For non-quantifiable or project-oriented tasks, measurement normally would involve:

- ◆ establishing the nature and objective(s) of the task;
- ◆ setting a deadline or due date; and
- ◆ setting progress or status report/meeting dates.

It is recommended that supervisor and the teleworker complete the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4) before each day the employee teleworks.

**6. If selected for the program, will there be changes in the teleworker's pay, benefits, sick leave, or overtime?**

No. Salary benefits and job responsibilities will not change when participating in the program. Current agency procedures for annual, sick or other forms of leave, and working overtime will continue to apply.

**7. Do teleworkers have to buy their own equipment (e.g. computer, modem, fax machine)?**

The determination of whether an employee is required to buy his/her own equipment is to be made by each agency. An agency may loan an employee the equipment necessary to perform the job, or if an employee already has the required equipment, the agency may agree that the employee may use his/her own equipment. Also, many jobs may be performed without the use of special equipment.

**8. Should a specific schedule be set for off-site work?**

Generally, employees and supervisors should agree on a specific day(s) and times the employee will work off-site. However, the work to be completed should be the controlling factor and scheduling should be arranged accordingly.

**9. Will teleworking eliminate the need for dependent care?**

No. Teleworking is not a substitute for child or elder care and employees should continue to make the same arrangements as if working at the main office.

**10. Must teleworkers remain in the project for the duration of the project?**

No. Either the teleworker or the teleworker's supervisor may terminate the teleworking arrangement at any time with reasonable notice or as agreed.

**11. Will allowing some employees to telework have a negative impact on employees who remain at the office?**

The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working off-site. One person's teleworking should not be permitted to adversely affect the work of employees at the main office. The teleworking employee's co-workers should be coached and counseled prior to beginning the program so that potential resentment and envy is minimized.

**12. Is teleworking a good way to employ disabled persons?**

Yes. Many employees with disabling conditions or injuries are often able to work but experience difficulty commuting or working in a regular office setting. Permitting a disabled employee to telework can supplement current efforts to accommodate the employee and provide another method of ensuring that an employee is able to work effectively.

**13. What are the benefits of teleworking?**

There are many general benefits to teleworking, and there are benefits that will be specific to your organization and staff. Some examples might be:

1. Improvements in employee morale and effectiveness.
2. Reductions in transportation costs including car insurance, maintenance, and wear.
3. Retention of skilled employees and reduction in turnover due in part to increased job satisfaction.
4. Accommodation of employees with short or long term health problems or family responsibilities, such as problems associated with elder care and latchkey children. However, employees should be reminded that teleworking is not a substitute for child or elder care.
5. Cost savings to the State in regard to office space, sick leave absences, and energy conservation.
6. Employees can better use their peak productivity periods within the limits of established laws.
7. Reduction in automobile-created air pollution and traffic congestion.
8. Potential for increased productivity.
9. Improved work atmosphere due to fewer co-worker nonbusiness interruptions.

**14. Does an employee have a right to be a teleworker?**

No. Teleworking participation is not a right. Management is responsible for deciding if the



position is one that is appropriate for work at a remote job site and for examining both the content of the work and the performance of the employee. Because this is a management work option, there is no automatic right of an employee to continue participation in the event of a change of supervisor.

**15. Can a supervisor participate in the telework program?**

Yes.

**16. Who is liable for work-related injuries and/or damages at the remote worksite?**

As a general rule, the State is liable for work-related injuries incurred in the performance of official job duties. State employees suffering work-related injuries and/or damages at the remote worksite are covered under the State's Workers' Compensation Law.

**17. What should a supervisor consider before agreeing to a teleworking arrangement?**

The supervisor and worker should examine the job requirements and determine what tasks can be accomplished at a remote worksite. Additionally, the supervisor should determine

- if the employee has the skill and knowledge of the job to work at the remote site;
- if the employee needs work-related input or support that is only available at the main office;
- the availability of equipment, as well as related costs necessary to support an employee at a remote worksite;
- how the employee can meet the requirements for necessary face-to-face contact or other types of main office contact required by the job; and
- policies and procedures necessary to ensure the integrity and security of information.

**18. How will work performance be monitored? Will teleworking lead to a decline in work performance?**

Generally, teleworking performance should be monitored in the same way main worksite performance is monitored. Optimally, performance should be monitored on a results-oriented basis. The supervisor will have to carefully plan and identify the nature and objective of the task, perhaps by establishing deadlines or arranging for progress reports and meetings. Most studies of teleworkers have reported that teleworking job performance equals or exceeds pre-teleworking performance.

**19. Should a specific schedule be set for work at the remote worksite?**

Yes. All work schedules are discretionary and require management approval. A pre-set

schedule of teleworking work hours should be established prior to the employee working at the remote worksite. Temporary teleworking assignments or changes in work schedule may be made at management's discretion to meet work needs or to accommodate the employee.

**20. What if a supervisor or a teleworker believes the teleworking arrangement is not working?**

Teleworking arrangements are not a right or condition of employment. Management may end an employee's participation in the teleworking program if the employee's performance declines or if the program is detrimental to an agency's needs. Also, the employee may end participation at anytime without cause.

**21. Will the employee be reimbursed for utility expenses associated with a remote worksite?**

No. The State assumes no responsibility for the teleworker's expenses related to heating, electricity, water, and space usage.

**22. What equipment will the employee need at the remote worksite and who will provide it?**

The needed equipment and who will provide it will vary by situation. Generally speaking, agencies are not required to provide equipment at remote worksites. Each agency must establish its own policies on the provision and installation of equipment.

**23. Are there restrictions on the use of State-owned equipment, software, or information at a remote worksite?**

Yes. State-owned equipment can be used for official purposes only. Teleworkers must adhere to all rules, regulations, and procedures relating to security and confidentiality of work-related information and data. Agencies must maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of the records. The Agency should revise appropriate records to indicate that the remote worksite is authorized for the use and maintenance of classified or confidential information and data.

**24. Who is responsible for maintaining and servicing State or privately-owned equipment used at the remote worksite?**

Generally, the State will be responsible for the service and maintenance of State-owned equipment. Also, generally, teleworkers using their own equipment are responsible for its service and maintenance.